

## Optional Features for Outdoor Learning Areas

### Butterfly Garden

**Description** – A butterfly garden consists of plants that attract butterflies and their larvae. Students grow and maintain specific types of plants. They have an opportunity to observe the interactions of plants and butterflies by exploring habitats, adaptations, and life cycles in a natural setting.

**Size** – Butterfly gardens may range from a one-acre plot of land to a five foot by one foot strip near a walkway. They may even be in a window box.

**Location** – Butterfly gardens may be placed in a large, open, sunny area. The area chosen needs to allow for sweet and/or sticky plant juices, overripe fruits, and the probability of bees for pollination. Any sunny walkway, entryway or courtyard provides areas for butterfly gardens.



**Materials Needed** – Rich, well-drained soil, plants for attracting butterflies, plants for feeding butterfly larvae, a water tray with rocks for the butterflies to stand in the water to drink, optional butterfly houses for decoration. You may need mulch in newly planted areas. Ideal plants include butterfly bushes, purple cone flowers, lavender, coreopsis, goldenrod and black-eyed susans.

**Labor Needed** – Amend the soil to be well drained and rich in organic matter for optimum growth. Depending on the size of butterfly garden created, sow seeds and/or install plants attractive to butterflies and their larvae. Mulch where necessary.

**Technical Assistance** – University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension offices may help with the design and choice of plants for your butterfly garden. Also check with local nurseries who may be willing to donate plants. See

<http://www.uky.edu/Agriculture/Entomology/entfacts/misc/ef006.htm>

for details on how to create a butterfly garden in Kentucky.

**Maintenance** – Weeding and replacing mulch, as needed.

**Challenges** – Butterfly Gardens are one of the easiest gardens to maintain. However, remember that flowers that attract butterflies also attract bees. Obtain allergy information and have sting remedies available in safety kits. A Butterfly Garden may be kept in a raised bed to provide for wheel chair access.

### **Resources**

- <http://udel.edu/~lynneb/butterfly/>
- <http://www.naba.org/pubs/bgh.html>
- American Museum of Natural History Butterfly Conservatory  
<http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/butterflies/garden.html>
- The Smithsonian Butterfly Garden  
<http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/butterflies/garden.html>  
<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/gardens/butterfly/index.html>